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Housekeepers' Chat

Wednesday, January 15, 1930.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "Has Your Child a Home?" Article by Ruth Peck McLeod, Farm & Fireside, August, 1929. Menu and recipes from Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

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Instead of giving you information from government bulletins today, I shall read you a little article by Ruth Peck McLeod, called: "Has Your Child a Home?"

Please collect your pencils and paper while I read the story, for I have a very nice children's menu today, and two new recipes.

First, though, let's read the story, "Has Your Child a Home?"

"There is no lovelier picture than a family enjoying their home--a family being comfortable and doing what they please. And when I say family I mean the children too. So many children haven't any home until they are well along in their teens. Indoors they are deprived of every freedom; all because their playthings mess up the house. The home must be kept clean, no matter what. Not a paper doll or a crayon pencil is allowed to get out of its box.

"I have no respect for touch-me-not living-rooms or the women who keep them clean. Rooms too nice to live in never make a home. I know women who pride themselves on their homemaking when all they do is keep house. Constantly they nag the children not to strew their stuff about and litter up the place. The draperies in their living-rooms must never be pushed back, even on dark, close days. The chairs must stay exactly so in prim, elegant order. The new desk blotter is not for blotting ink. The pillows on the couches never rest tired heads. The lampshades are chosen for their decoration and not for the light they give.

"Children from homes like these, I have noticed, get the gadding habit early. They belong to that roving, restless type depending on the movies and other youngsters' homes for their good times. One can't blame them a bit. Why stay home if home doesn't make you happy? Certainly there is no fun for little folks, or big ones either, in a house where there is nothing to do but help to keep it clean.

"Children can't help the mess they make when they don't have a proper place to play. They need a place all their own to keep their things, and a place to use them too. Even the baby of a year will appreciate a corner for his toys. Not every one of us can give over a whole room to the child. But

the wise mother will provide a special drawer or portion of a closet for just his things.

"If he can have a room for himself be sure that it is furnished for the child and not to please an occasional overnight guest. There should be a child's desk, bookcases and low reading lights and comfortable chairs. Furniture and equipment need not be expensive, some of it you can make right at home. Grocery boxes of various sizes may be painted to hold blocks, trains and woodwork tools. Out of ordinary fruit crates I made a splendid set of shelves for books and toys. But whatever money the child's room costs is an investment that brings big returns-- pays big dividends in fine boys and girls who are contented with their home.

"For six years I did without my breakfast-room to give my boy a place to play. His blackboard was hung on the wall together with pictures he had painted. The cupboard held his toys. For his books there was a set of old shelves painted like the woodwork. The room was furnished with chairs and an attractive small work table.

"We now live in a larger house and son has a closet off the hall for his things. This he keeps in good order. He has his own room too. He plays in any part of the house he chooses, but the breakfast-room is still the one he likes best. The table is such a dandy place on which to spread out work. When he works in other rooms he has a folding, collapsible card table for his use. Always for cut-outs he has a trash basket by his side and few snips get to the floor. The living-room table has a spacious drawer in which he keeps his crayons, paints, pencils, erasers and drawing tablets. He also has two drawers in the built-in kitchen cupboard that hold similar equipment. Two sections of one bookcase are provided for his books. My next purchase for him is to be a larger desk.

"I know children, and of prosperous parents too, who haven't a decent place to get their lessons--no desk, no study light. It would be no wonder if these children should fail in school. They are not encouraged to work at home. Just an old kitchen table enameled can be turned into an attractive study desk. Even a store-bought desk doesn't cost much and it may mean such a lot in building character in a boy or girl. A child with a desk usually becomes methodical and systematic. He looks after his "papers." No safety vault could hold more treasured possessions than a child's papers and his collection of curios. Such things are priceless in his estimation.

"Children's possessions are to be respected, for whatever material the child collects is in connection with his life's ambitions, his vocational tendencies, his dominant interests. We punish a child if he destroys our things; yet we put his possessions in the waste-basket because they get in our way. If he flies in a temper over his loss, likely as not father settles the racket with the razor strop. The child is often made to feel that he is in the way, that he has no excuse for having possessions. And I know from experience that a child will gladly keep his room or corner in good order, if you make it HIS."

Now let's write the menu, which is just as good for grown-ups as it is for children; Creamed Dried Beef and Hard-Cooked Eggs; Mashed Rutabaga Turnip; Braised Lettuce; Oatmeal Bread; Apricot Tapioca, with Top Milk or Cream.

I shall give you two recipes, one for Braised Lettuce, which is lettuce cooked in bacon fat, and another for Apricot Tapioca.

First, the Braised Lettuce -- four ingredients, for this tasty vegetable dish:

2 large hard heads iceberg lettuce	SALT, and
4 tablespoons bacon fat	Pepper.

Four ingredients, for Braised Lettuce: (Repeat)

Cut each head of lettuce into four pieces, taking care that a portion of the center stem is left on each section to hold the leaves together. Heat the fat in a large skillet, put in the lettuce, cover, and cook for 30 minutes, or until the lettuce is tender. If much liquid is drawn out of the lettuce, discard some of it during cooking. Turn carefully if necessary. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and serve on a hot platter.

Next, the Apricot Tapioca -- five ingredients, for this delicious dessert

1/2 pound dried apricots	1/4 teaspoon salt, and
3 cups water	1/2 cup sugar.
3 tablespoons quick-cooking tapioca	

Five ingredients, for Apricot Tapioca: (Repeat)

Wash the apricots and soak them overnight in the water. In the morning cook the apricots until tender and drain. If necessary, add water to the juice to make 2 cups, stir in the tapioca and salt, and cook in a double boiler for 15 minutes, or until the tapioca is clear. Force the apricots through a sieve and add the pulp and the sugar to the tapioca. Chill and serve with whipped cream.

To repeat the menu: Creamed Dried Beef and Hard-Cooked Eggs; Mashed Rutabaga Turnip; Braised Lettuce; Oatmeal Bread; Apricot Tapioca, with Top Milk or Cream.

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